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THE ISSUES OF THIS PRESENT LIFE.

It has been a painful thing to know that, in exposing the unscripturalness of the long-accepted dogma of eternal torment, and in insisting that all scripture teaching about retribution must be weighed alongside of its teaching that the provision to raise all is an act of grace toward all, there is danger that some will turn this grace of God into lascivousness. A great barrier to our brethren's reception of the truth at this point is the natural dread they have of conceding any hope for the future to men of sinful life. In all this, indeed, they underestimate the degrading effect upon men's lives of all false views of God, and show their want of confidence in His truth to produce the surest and best results in human conduct. And yet, conscious of the fact that sinful men always have abused the grace of the gospel, even when imperfectly understood, and that the grace of this full gospel may bring with it to some minds special danger, we have sought to press home upon our readers, in its full meaning, the tremendous import which Scripture attaches to the trial through which men are passing in this present life. And to this matter we now again invite attention.

What is the present life? What is man's opportunity and risk under it?

Man is a creature, endowed with life from the Spirit of God, and built up into a living image of God through the possession of a body and soul which brings him into relation to both sides of this created system, the visible and invisible, and marks him as its appointed heir. On the arena of this system there is a great struggle going on between powers of light and darkness, forces of life and of death. What we call the forces of nature are ranged on either side in this contest. Man is now under training and discipline on this battle-ground. His present gift of life, with its boundless possibilities and heritage, may be saved or lost. This embodied being may sink down into corruption and consequent destruction, or it may be purified and made eternal. The ship that floats us on this boundless sea of being may be wrecked, and its precious cargo lost, or it may be safely guided into the eternal heaven. But victory in this conflict, safety on this voyage, can only come through vigilance, through self-mastery, through warfare against potent enemies within and without. And the only power of victory is the triumphant life of Christ, imparted to us by faith in Him as the Captain of our Salvation.

It is manifest, therefore, that, both for the Christian and the ordinary man, this life is fraught with tremendous issues. In the first place the Bible gives no countenance to that easy-going religion of our day which views entrance into life-eternal as the reward of a few pious impulses, or of a faith which rolls off, not only the burden of its sins, but of its righteous living, upon the Saviour as if He were a gift from God to make passport for men to Heaven easy, notwithstanding the obstinate sinful

character which makes them unfit for that abode. Now, neither Jesus, nor His apostles, taught that salvation, the essence of which in their view is salvation from sin, was such an easy matter. He told men that they must strive to enter in—that severe self-denial, the sacrifice of hand or foot or eye—complete self-mastery, would be requisite. Nothing but the voluntary surrender of the old self to the cross would meet the case. Accordingly the apostles always address their converts as men who had accepted this view of the case—who had confessed judgment against the flesh with its affections and lusts, and who were therefore to continually reckon themselves as dead unto sin, and crucified with Christ to the world. That this position was one easy to maintain is contradicted by all they say, and by uniform Christian experience. And yet they view this death of self as the only gate to life. Paul speaks of how he always freely surrendered himself to death for Jesus' sake, and for the sake of His body, the Church. He kept his body under, that he might not be a castaway. He sought to have fellowship with Christ's sufferings, if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. And at the close, he looked for the crown of life because he had fought a good fight, and finished his course and kept the faith. And this corresponds with the risen Lord's warning to the churches through the Revelator, that He would give the crown of life to them who were faithful unto death, and an inheritance of glory to him that overcometh, and that He would infallibly give to every one of us according to our works. All this surely does not sound like our modern funeral orations which give all Christians

alike, the lame, the halt and the blind, an immediate passport to a throne and a crown, and to the fields of glory.

Are there few then that be saved? Yes, we should say, few that enter into immediate and full salvation. This suggests that our Lord seems to speak of the possibility of partial and uncompleted salvation. He assumes that some may enter into life halt and maimed. St. Paul speaks of a present destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Who shall say that, if the consuming fire of God does not burn the evil out of life and character here, this process of fire may not go on beyond? Paul at least speaks of some Christians whose life work upon the temple of God must be burnt up, because it is but wood, hay and stubble, and declares that such shall be saved "so as by fire."

This line of Scripture teaching shows us how important is the issue of this present trial in life to the Christian. It is no easy thing even for him to succeed in it. And *complete* success, *immediate* reward, would seem to be the prerogative only of such earnest souls, as Paul, who counted all things but loss that he might win Christ, and attain unto the resurrection of the dead. And yet all Christians have this immense advantage over other men. They are already quickened out of death. They are raised with Christ. His life has begun to struggle in them and through them on to final victory. They are at least born of God, and so have connection in life with Christ, which, whatever tribulations and hazards await them, must protect them from ever being separated from His love.

But those who are unbelievers—what shall we say of their future? Here Scripture is emphatic in teaching that this present gift of life, which Christians save, even though as by fire, is by them lost. They "lose their lives." They "lose their souls," in exchange for which nothing can recompense. Their present estate in life becomes bankrupt. The barque in which they are sailing on this ocean of life from time to eternity is utterly wrecked, its precious treasures engulfed in the abyss. We need a revival in our day of the terrors of death, the wages of sin. We have little idea of what an appalling thing it is to sink in this abyss. The prophetic Psalms put upon Jesus' lips such words as this in view of it:

"Save me, oh God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire where there is no standing. I am come into deep waters where the floods overflow me. I am weary with my crying; my throat is dried; mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. Deliver me out of the mire and let me not sink: Let me be delivered from them that hate me and out of the deep waters. Let not the water-flood overwhelm me, neither let the deep swallow me up; Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me." (Ps. 69).

With such strong crying and tears did this Divine man, in the days of his flesh, "offer up prayers and supplications unto Him that was able to save him out of death, and was heard in that He feared." (Heb. v. 7).

Now this conflict with "him that hath the power of death, that is the devil," (Heb ii. 14) the unsaved man must meet alone. And he must sink under it to a destruction of both body and soul in hell. We have often alluded to the case of the rich man and Lazarus as showing that the torments of the soul in this process of de-

struction may long survive the throes of dissolution of the material body. But the end must be the entire casting out of the sinner from his estate and heritage in life into the outer darkness, where he must abide an outcast spirit, in a bondage intensified and prolonged according to his deserts, until awakened out of the gloom by the voice of the Son of God. But will not another gift of life, which we insist must be ascribed to the grace of God, and not to His wrath and curse, give the sinner opportunity to recover all and more than he has lost? We reply that his is not "the resurrection of life," but "of judgment." That is, it does not lift him into unfettered life, but leaves him still under judgment. Moreover, it proceeds according to the law of harvest. "To every seed his own body." Furthermore as we have seen that even Christians may enter into life halt or maimed, so the sinner's heritage of future life may be fearfully despoiled. Who knows how much he may lose of *himself* (Luke ix. 26). We have been interested lately in some Review articles which gave instances of men of double personality. By some malformation or disease of brain they became liable to loss or confusion of personality. The thread of self-consciousness in their proper line of being was broken, and resumed in another line. So that the same organism seemed to be alternately possessed by two persons, each having a distinct experience to which the other was oblivious. This may illustrate to us what possibilities of maimed and shattered being may lie in the final wreck of body and soul which sin brings, and how much of life's present treasures, and even of personal consciousness, may be lost, though there be a

future rehabilitation of the lost one through resurrection. Some souls may have to begin the battle of life again far down the scale, and sadly stripped and maimed. And surely there is no promise that the sinner will by it regain what now is lost. We have no other idea of present probation than that what is now lost is lost forever. If a man embarks in business, and loses all his capital and credit and good character—if at some distant day a kind friend sets him up in business again, this does not remedy his former bankruptcy, nor repair his loss, nor diminish the suffering through which he has already passed. If a careless captain loses his vessel and cargo at sea, and is himself cast away on a desert island where he abides a long time in loneliness and remorse, his subsequent rescue and the possession of another ship, would not restore the one that was lost. A man sentenced to penal servitude in the mines of Siberia for twenty years would not have "another chance" to escape his punishment because his term of captivity had expired. If it were in the power of a human government to restore to life a man whom it had hung for murder a century before, this would not be giving him a new trial. No future probation can recover what is irrevocably lost. And herein lies the convincing argument against the theory of a prolonged probation in an intermediate state. There is no intermediate state for the sinner between his death-sentence and its execution. "After *death*, judgment." "The rich man died, and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment"—while his brothers for whom he was anxious were still at their ease. Sheol is penal. Hell is an abyss now yawning beneath our

feet. What the sinner has to face therefore is this present pit of destruction, in which life, the soul, the self, are *lost;* with no quickening life from Christ to lift him above this dark abyss. He is by death cast out of his life-estate, banished and discrowned, suffering age-long destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. And when restored, it can only be to some outer circle of life and blessing, on the border, it may be, of the darkness of a second death.

A right view then of the responsibilities of this present life reveals to us the importance of its immediate salvation through the Only Name, and of the fearful loss they must incur who despise and wonder and perish. The practical power of this fear of immediate casting into hell—which is not merely remorse, but a real destruction—would be far greater, we believe, than is the present power of the old dogma. Few *really* believe the old. It is too vast and vague a thing for human comprehension. Moreover, the idea of God, and of His love in Christ toward man, utter a constant protest in the minds of men against receiving it as final truth. The countries of Christendom that have been longest under the influence of this tradition are those that most rebel against it. It is in them that its power to restrain from vice and ungodliness has proved conspicuously weak. But this doctrine of grace toward all in providing to rescue all from the death brought by sin upon all, and yet a grace that reigns through righteousness by rendering to every man according to his work, and that does not set aside in any case the operation of the law "The soul that sinneth it shall die,"—a doctrine which invests this death with the

pains and losses and banishment that properly belong to it, and which opens heaven only to the purified and the holy, when once understood, would have far more power in restraining men from sin and in drawing them to God. It is only as men see Him as he is that they become like Him.

DAY OF JUDGMENT.

In a recent issue of the *Public Ledger* we noticed a succession of public calamities, chronicled as having taken place first at Zug in Switzerland, where a part of the village sank and disappeared in the lake. About a hundred persons were drowned and 600 left homeless. In China "the Wenchow river overflowed its banks, submerging a large territory. Thousands of persons are believed to have been drowned. The sufferings of the survivors are described as terrible."

"The town of Nagi Karolyi in Hungary was destroyed by a hurricane and water spout on Wednesday night. The site of the town and adjoining district is converted into a vast lake. Many persons lost their lives. The people of the town believed the Day of Judgment had come."

We notice these items, not because such a concurrence of catastrophes is unusual, but because of the impression they usually make upon the minds of the sufferers, and to which the last remark above quoted gives expression. It is a common instinct to associate such sudden outbursts of the destructive energy of Nature's forces with

Divine judgments. The Old Testament is filled with proofs of this, and gives inspired sanction to it. It is the common view taken of such calamities in the Psalms and the Prophets. The prophecy of Joel, of which an extraordinary plague of locusts was the occasion, furnishes a familiar illustration. We would by no means assert that this prophecy does not look forward to still more signal calamities and future outbreaks of Divine vengeance. But, in the conception of the prophet, that plague of devouring insects, of drought and famine, was a real day of judgment, a veritable "day of the Lord." (Ch. ii. 1). Impressive imagery, subsequently employed in the New Testament to describe "the day of the Lord," is used here.

And this leads us to remark that the world's "day of judgment" so often referred to in the Scriptures is probably a very different thing from that conception of it which has become incrusted in popular theology. Theology has given such prominence to the idea of an universal distant assize after a general resurrection of all mankind, and ushered in by a general wreck and conflagration, that men have been blinded to the evidences that the Son of Man is even now seated at the right hand of power, with all the forces of Nature as His angels and servants, and that he has all along been judging the world in righteousness. Nations, communities, individuals are constantly being brought to face the realities of their judgment day. Scripture plainly teaches that the antediluvian world had its day of judgment at the flood, that Sodom and Gomorrah met their fate in the day of wrath when Heaven rained down upon them the venge-

ance of eternal fire (Jude 7). The overthrow of ancient Babylon is foretold in Isaiah xiii. as the coming of the day of the Lord, in which the sun and stars and all the constellations shall cease to give their light upon it, and destruction from the Lord of hosts shall overwhelm it. In the same way Jerusalem, ancient Rome, and other nations and proud cities have had their day of judgment. And individuals, too, like Nadab and Abihu and Korah, and Ananias and Sapphira—like Herod and Julius Cæsar and Nero and Alexander and Napoleon have met their day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. And men and communities all around us, who are no greater sinners perhaps than the eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, whom Jesus pronounced no worse than their Jerusalem neighbours, are being brought to their day of judgment. The villagers in Hungary were doubtless right. To them a day of judgment did come. And just here we call attention to the fact that in the Greek Testament the article "the" is always omitted (with one exception) from this phrase "day of judgment." In the Bible view, nations, men, come to their day of judgment long before the remote assize to which we have been accustomed to postpone it. And hence, in Scripture, this day has a much closer relation to individuals and special communities than we have been led to think in our traditional conceptions which mass all mankind for judgment at one great day in the far-distant future. Even our recent Revisers show their bondage to this idea by always adhering to the phrase "*the* day of judgment" where the absence of the article leaves us free to say "*a* day," or

"*their* day of judgment." We believe it would be a great gain for the cause of both Christian truth and public virtue if, instead of the expectation that the results of human conduct are to be met in the remote future, to which the fruitage of our doing is postponed, we could see that "the eyes of the Lord are now open upon all the ways of the sons of men to give unto *every* one according to his way, and according to the fruit of his doings." We need to have our eyes opened, as were those of Elisha's servant, to see all Nature alive with God's ministries of mercy and of wrath. We need to view our Lord as now enthroned above all the powers of the universe, the forces of nature, which are angels of His might, His ministers, which do His pleasure. We shall then cease to see in the plagues and famines and earthquakes, the battles and conflagrations of which the newspapers make almost daily record, the mere results of natural laws, or of human passions and follies. We shall see the hand of the Son of Man, the world's King and Judge, in them all. We shall see that "the history of the world is the judgment of the world." And we shall learn that His "coming to judgment" is but the open and signal manifestation of an administration which began with His ascension, and which, now carried on behind the clouds, is soon to be so unveiled that before Him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

"MANY people seem to think that, while theology must go on improving from age to age, it must also remain exactly what it was a hundred years ago."

THE PLAGUE OF HEAT.

And the fourth poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given unto it to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat: and they blasphemed the name of the God which hath the power over these plagues; and they repented not to give Him glory. Rev. xvi., 8, 9.

The intense heat which has prevailed over the whole country for the past month has doubtless brought these words from the Apocalypse to many minds. The prostration and suffering produced by the unwonted energy of the sun's rays, with the consequent mortality, have made the heat to rise almost to the proportion of a plague. A few words, therefore, concerning the meaning of the above-quoted Scripture will be in place.

A fundamental question in the interpretation of this Book is that of its date. If the modern school of interpreters can make out their case, when they insist that it was written about A. D. 68, before the destruction of Jerusalem, and during the persecution under Nero, they establish a strong presumption that the calamities and woes it foretells relate to the judgments by which, first, the Jewish State, and afterwards the pagan, persecuting empire of Rome was overthrown. We are not yet convinced, however, that they have made out their case. But into this question we cannot now enter. It may be admitted that these plagues have primary reference to these swiftly-approaching disasters, by which the chief worldly enemies of the Church were brought down to the dust. And yet they equally apply to the desolation that must overtake the enemies of God in every age, and especially the Christ-rejecting worshippers of Mammon

and of Nature, who in the last days of this age refuse to acknowledge Him as the world's lawful King and Saviour.

Still another question concerning these predicted plagues. Are we to look for their verification in the sphere of physical calamities, according to the letter, or in that of spiritual verities? Have we here predicted a veritable plague of fiery heat from the sun, such as our late experience may be an earnest of, and, as we know, is physically possible? Or, is the reference to some wilting blast of a despotic worldly power, of whose rule the sun is a proper symbol? Or, if not this, is some scorching up of the streams of spiritual life and joy in the soul of man the thing intended?

To this we reply by appealing first to the uniform scriptural fact, apparent in all the records of God's dealing with man, that the forces of nature are the common executioners of His judgments. It was so at the flood, at the judgments upon Egypt, which, indeed, are the prototype of the plagues threatened in the Revelation. All through human history, sacred and profane, earthquakes and famine, pestilences, hail-storms, locusts, as in the days of Joel; drought, as in the days of Elijah, have been the recognized instruments of the Divine vengeance, and the signs that a day of the Lord was at hand. Our Lord, in predicting the advent of His kingdom, warns His disciples to expect this same kind of calamities. "There shall be famines and earthquakes in divers places." No good reason can be given why these words should be taken out of the sphere of physical events to which they belong, and to which Old Testa-

ment usage assigns them. Nor is there any reason why we should refuse to believe, when the Revelator predicts that men shall be scorched under the blasting rays of the sun, that just this plague of solar heat shall be one of the forms in which the God above Nature shall punish those who worship and serve the creature above the Creator. Indeed, with the view taken in the article preceding this of all the energies of nature as angels of His might, we see that such judgments are a part of His constant and universal administration. It has been true ever since these words were written that large portions of the earth's surface and multitudes of its inhabitants have been smitten under the javelin beams of the sun. Our experience the last few weeks may suggest to us what must be the greater sufferings and the greater peril from this source of the crowded populations of India and parts of Arabia and Africa, where such torrid heat is not occasional, but uniform throughout the summer, and where human life is burdened and enfeebled by it to an extent unknown to us. And it cannot be difficult for any of us to conceive how a few added degrees of heat to that recently experienced would bring upon us a misery such as is here sketched by the inspired seer. The point we would make from his words is that Nature is ever to be viewed as a great armory from which its Author is ever drawing weapons for the punishment of those who despise His name, and out of which He shall yet bring those judgments upon the earth by means of which its inhabitants shall be humbled under His mighty hand.

While insisting, however, from all the past analogies of God's judicial dealings, that these woes are literal

physical calamities, we would by no means assert that they contain no reference to woes that fall upon mankind in the spiritual sphere. As there may be "a famine of the word of God" in the land, so there may be scorching fires that drink up the energies of man's spiritual nature and turn him into an open blasphemer. And there may be unknown correspondences between the physical and spiritual blight which make one the visible token of the other. A vast deal of light is yet to come from the knowledge of the connection between things visible and invisible. The material world is filled with shadows of things spiritual. These visible happenings are the expression of things transpiring in the realm of things unseen. There is truth, therefore, in both these methods of Scripture interpretation. God would not make the sun, His ordained minister of life and light to the world, a means of smiting and death, unless there had first been a sinful abuse of His bounties, and an impious shrouding of His glory behind the glory of the creature. There must first have been a hellish energy in man before the energies of nature could be so stirred up against him. This principle of interpretation which makes the natural ever a parable of things spiritual, would convert for us the common things of human experience into the tokens of God's ways, and teach us to view the whole system of Nature and of Providence as only the clouds by which He now conceals Himself from our sight, and on the wings of which He is ever coming, both for judgment and for blessing. Some day these clouds will be parted and His glory will appear, and the earth be filled with it as the waters cover the sea.

We cannot then view the recent heat, which directly or indirectly caused the death of thousands, in any other light than as a sign that the Judge is always standing at the door, and that, until men render to Him the homage which is His due, there will be increasing outbreaks of such hostility in Nature to human happiness and life. The subjugation of all her forces to promote the welfare of man will not be complete until man himself shall confess Jesus Christ as the enthroned Lord of Creation, and until His manifested glory shall break the fetters of the common bondage under which both man and the creature suffer by reason of sin.

REASONS FOR TOLERATION.

We believe the church should tolerate the effort we have made to induce her to amend her eschatology, and in the requisite discussion of the involved points, for these reasons:

1. It resides in the very idea of the church that there must be growth in divine knowledge until her ultimate unity and perfection are attained. To this end there must be room for the free operation of the Spirit of God in unfolding the truth. This requires opportunity for reverent investigation and discussion. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

2. Because of confessed obscurity in the whole of the church's teaching concerning the last things. Our wisest teachers admit that the Reformed Theology left many of these problems unsolved, and that a fuller investigation

of them is a duty put upon the church in these last days by the Spirit and Providence of God.

3. Because a new era of investigation at points even more essential than this is coming upon the Presbyterian Church, which it is both unwise and impossible to resist. Whatever evils may result from this spirit of free inquiry, the evils of its suppression would be far greater.

4. Because a wide diversity already exists between the views of future punishment current among us, and as presented from our pulpits, and the statements of our Standards that both before and after the resurrection, "the wicked are to be punished with most grievous and unspeakable torments, without intermission, with the devil and his angels in hell-fire forever." If fidelity to these statements is to be the test by which our right to remain in the church is to be determined, then we ask our brethren to honestly ask before God whether they are so free from sin in this respect as to have the right to cast a first stone at us.

5. Because we honestly believe that we have taken up this line of testimony in obedience to the Spirit of God, and from motives of sincere love for the whole church which needs this larger, better view of God's great plan of grace before it can be unified; and specially in the interest of the Presbyterian Church to whose welfare we have devoted a life-long ministry, and which greatly needs relief from the incubus of monstrous views of God's sovereign justice which obscure her own constant testimony to His fatherhood and grace.

ORGANIC UNION.

In the current discussions of the question of Church Union we often hear the opinion expressed that organic union is not now to be thought of. Even if it were possible it is quite common to regard it as undesirable, and as likely to prove a hindrance rather than a help to the world's conversion. All that is hoped for is what is called "Christian Union," which is defined to be such an extension of the amenities of Christian intercourse among different denominations that their practical fellowship in the faith and hope of the gospel and in Christian work shall be acknowledged.

We need therefore to be reminded that the New Testament does not recognize any other union in the church than that which is organic, and no outward union as possible except it find expression through organic forms. The uniform description of the church is, that it is a body. A body is an organism. The church as the body of Christ is pervaded by one common life. Its members are knit together by joints and bands, as are the members of a living human body. Each one is set in his place, not only that he may receive nourishment, but that he may fulfil a function for the welfare of the whole. Christ, as the Head of this body, has bestowed the gifts and appointed the offices requisite for the growth of the whole towards that unity of faith and perfection of life which shall bring it to the stature of its complete manhood in Him. This is the normal, the divine idea of the church No countenance is given to the idea that the church is a mere association, or an assemblage of societies, called by different names, and bound to one another only by ties

of fraternal courtesy. The growth of one member of the human body, apart from the symmetrical growth of the whole, would be a monstrosity. So with the church. Denominations are excrescences. Nor can any individual member or denomination hope to attain perfection except as the whole advances toward it, and as their denominational life is absorbed and lost in that of the body.

The church therefore needs to keep before her no goal short of organic union. No other union belongs to this case but union in life. And such union must of necessity refuse all outward forms of expression except the one appropriate to it. And that is an organism. And this leads us to say that true church union will never be accomplished until our modern Christianity is stirred up to take a higher idea of the church. The association idea has fastened itself upon it. Its officers have come to be largely managers of associations. They have partly lost the true idea of office in the church as the organ and instrument of the Holy Ghost. Hence its idea of even organic union is that of enlargement of the denominational machine. No wonder that it shrinks from it if this be all. Our large denominations are already sufficiently cumbrous and unwieldy. But true organic union recognizes the Holy Spirit as the one organizer and director of the body. And office is sought or conferred only as it may become the channel of His ministry and life to the edifying of the whole. This was the idea of the primitive church before corruption stole in. Dare any one, with the New Testament in his hands, and after the Lord's final prayer for His church, say that it may not again be realized? All that is needed is that these choked and broken channels, which the denominational

spirit has made and perpetuates, be cleansed and restored so that His life may again find a way for itself through the body. To this end we who are Christians must bewail these errors and factions which keep us apart. We must confess the sin of them, and implore God by his Spirit to raise up this broken and wounded body called by His Name out of its low estate, and to fill it again with His life-giving presence. Interchange of kindly feeling is commendable, so far as it goes. God grant that there may be more of it. But it is only a means to the end. That end is such an organic union as shall testify to the world that the church is the Body of Christ, animated by His life, pervaded by His Spirit, authorized to speak and work for Him, and freighted with the bounties of His healing and salvation for all the world. Until such union is realized we shall look in vain for the world's conversion.

PHYSICAL SALVATION.

Without doubt the apostles regarded the risen Jesus, and presented Him to their hearers, as the source of a new life-power to men, a regenerating, healing power, reaching not only to the springs of spiritual but of physical life. We are accustomed to regard the physical effects of salvation, as seen in the healing of the impotent man, as merely the signs or proofs of a supernatural spiritual healing. But they are more than simply signs; they are also effects. Such a view as this gives a far truer idea of our necessity as needing salva-

tion, and of how fully our need has been met. We say a man needs to be saved. What does this mean? Is it merely that he is in danger of future punishment, or that his moral condition is such as to unfit him for future happiness? It means this indeed, but more also. It means that the very sources of life in the man have been impaired and defiled. Hence its development has been away from God and out of harmony with His eternal laws. "All sin is lawlessness," writes St. James. And hence there is disorder and excess and irritation, and sometimes frenzy, among our life-forces. There are spiritual vices, such as pride and selfishness and envy. And there are disordered physical cravings, carnal lusts that war against both soul and body. So that diseases and bad tempers and derangements in the body are just as truly the fruit of sin as vices of the mind. They are alike the result of a disordered life. Something is wrong in the vital constitution of man, in his original life-endowment. And therefore no remedy can reach the case short of a new endowment. When the apostles spoke to men of Jesus as the Prince of life, whom God had raised from the dead, they meant to declare that God had now opened a new fountain of life and healing for mankind; one that was to affect us not only by spiritual impressions upon the mind, but as a new stream of life, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, through the whole region of our lives. Hence it was inevitable that this new life-power should demonstrate its energy in the region of the body also. Such bodily healing as that of this impotent man was a more powerful result than that ordinarily witnessed. And

yet it differed in degree and not in kind from the blessings in which all believers shared.

All this is more apparent when we consider further that bodily disorders are uniformly viewed in the New Testament as manifestations of "the power of the enemy." We are but little aware how deep and wide-spread is that malign power which God, for the wise ends of our training for the dignities of an eternal life, has suffered Satan to usurp in this created system. And hence we know little of the far-reaching range of that conflict in which we are now engaged with the ruler of this world's darkness. The lines of this warfare reach down to the foundations of our physical as well as our moral nature. And therefore the salvation which meets the case is constantly spoken of as a work of "new creation."

The practical end of this discussion is to urge upon the attention of Christians an aspect of Christ's saving work which is often overlooked. We seem to think that God's "saving health" is for the region of the soul, but that He can or will do nothing for us in the region of the body. But we are bold to say that any salvation which does not make itself felt in the region of the body, as well as of the spirit, can never meet our case. The fetters that bind men to sin are no less physical than moral. The law of sin which is in our members is in the members of the body. I look over any Christian congregation and ask myself, What are the hindrances to the spiritual life in these persons? I may be told that some are absorbed in money-making, others in the pleasures of life, and, in general terms, that they are too much taken up with the things of the world. All true,

so far as it goes. But the story is not all told. I find that some are the slaves of bodily appetite, and others are clogged and weighed down with some form of physical infirmity. With some, dyspepsia or a torpid liver beclouds their sky and keeps them spiritless and gloomy. Others have disorder of nerves. Some are vexed with an irascible temper. A large proportion of soldiers in the Christian army are thus in hospital, or otherwise *hors du combat*, disabled for warfare or work by some kind of infirmity; it may be one that is constitutional or hereditary. But, because the maladies which disable them are physical, they regard themselves as excused. They deem it inevitable that they must succumb. They are thus defeated by the enemy, and know not that he has overcome them, because he has assailed them along the channels of the body, and with physical weapons. They never imagine that he can have anything to do with the liver or the nerves.

And yet the fact is that it is through these very avenues of the body he finds entrance. In these very ways he entangles and imprisons and impoverishes the spiritual life. Sin, be it remembered, is the disorder of the life. It disorganizes and degrades life in all its functions. Its effects, therefore, are as truly apparent in the body as in the mind. And new life from the Spirit of God must give energy and buoyancy through the whole region of man's life. How, otherwise, can we present our bodies unto God as living sacrifices, and our members as instruments of righteousness to bring forth fruit unto Him? The truth is, unless the Holy Spirit bless me with His healing, invigor-

ating power in this region, as well as in spirit, then my case is only half met. It is among the life-forces of which my body is the home and the organ that sin has bred anarchy, and they must be subdued to His sway, if I am to be of use in His service. In the case of an inebriate, for example, his shattered and debased life-powers must be subdued and tranquillized and reorganized around a new centre.

Now, this is precisely the salvation given us in Christ. He is the new Lord of life. We get a new spirit of life from Him, a new life endowment, stronger than the old life of sin, and able to subdue all the faculties and functions of our being to itself. "He forgiveth all our sins and healeth all our diseases."

We are to recognize, indeed, that the complete redemption of the body will be effected only through its resurrection from the dead. Its final triumph over infirmities and disease will come only through its final triumph over death. And yet we have now the first fruits and earnest of that triumph. This miracle of healing was such an earnest. And so, also, was the increased buoyancy and gladness which characterized the first converts to Christianity, and of which there are many illustrations in our own times. In the Corinthian church, where there were many who were weak and sickly, this state of things is spoken of as a mark of God's disfavor, a chastisement for their sins at the Lord's table. This implies that weakness and sickliness are evils which it was expected that the presence of the Holy Spirit in a man would overcome. I do not say prevent or always remove, but *overcome.* Paul seems to

have been much tried with physical infirmities. He had a serious one, a thorn in the flesh. But he was not overborne by them. He did not suffer them to tie his hands or to put him to bed. The power of Christ in him triumphed over all invalidity or weariness or pain, and nerved him to an endurance of labor and fatigue and hardship such as to make his life a marvel of the ages.—*Mystery of Creation and of Man.*

NOTES ON CURRENT OPINIONS AND EVENTS.

Revisions in the Scotch Assemblies.—The Rev. C. A. Briggs, D. D., Professor in the Union Theological Seminary, is now in Scotland, and writes to *The Independent* concerning the progress made toward revision of the Confession, or a change in the terms of subscription. From his letter we note the following:

The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Established Church alluded to this subject in his opening address in these words:

"It will not do for the Church, for any Church, to face an age, all astir with inquiry and investigation, on the assertion that it is disabled from learning anything or unlearning anything—especially a Church that claims no infallibility, a Church resting on Scripture, whose wonderful structure is fitted to attract continual fresh search, and to furnish fresh lessons. But then just as little can the Church take up the ground that it has been dealing with uncertainties for the last 1,800 or the last 300 years. To do that would be to deny its own essence—would be as much, in fact, as to renounce the faith. It is the Church's assured confidence in the substance of her message, it is the cheerful steadfastness with which she proclaims her faith, that enables and prepares her to wait with like cheerfulness and equanimity any fresh light that may arise, or any readjustment which may be seen to be called for. Because she is sure that her treasure is safe, that her great Lord lives, that the Spirit is given, and that the word of the Lord endureth forever; therefore she can contentedly entertain any valid admonition that may either enable her more fully to possess her treasure, or lead her to hold it more free from mixture."

These words grant everything that can be desired. They freely admit that God has something yet to teach His church, and that she is bound to hold herself open at all times to the reception of new

light. Only she must be sure that it is from Him. In view of this confessed duty and calling of the church, what a miserable mistake the founders of some of our theological seminaries made in shutting up their Professors by an iron-clad oath not to teach anything contrary to, or inconsistent with, the full Westminster Standards. And how pitiable the position of such Professors, to be thus forbidden to learn anything outside of that system, or what is just as bad, to be prohibited from teaching the highest and best thoughts that may come to them in these days when God is pouring fresh light from so many quarters upon His Word, unless these thoughts can somehow be squared to the intelligence of a document framed two centuries and a half ago.

SUBSCRIPTION.

In the same Assembly an overture was received from the Presbytery of Selkirk asking that a change be ordered in the terms by which elders are required to subscribe to the Standards. Principal Cunningham moved that the overture be received, and that a Committee be appointed to consider the whole subject of subscriptions now required by office-bearers of the church, and to report any modifications that may be desirable. He called attention to the fact that ministers needed relief, as well as elders. This motion was carried.

In the Free Church Assembly the subject came up in a different shape. Our readers will remember the movement toward revision in the Presbytery of Glasgow, made this spring, by Prof. Candlish. The Synod of Glenelg took offence at this movement, and complained to the Assembly. After a severe rebuke of the Synod by Dr. Walter Smith, of Edinburgh, and a brief discussion, the Assembly refused to entertain the complaint.

Prof. Briggs adds,

"The movement of Dr. Candlish was defeated in his own Presbytery by a small majority of the elders, the majority of the ministers being in favor of it. But the movement has only been postponed for a year. It will come before the next General Assembly without doubt."

It is unaccountable to us that our American Presbyterian Church should be so far behind the Scotch Churches in a movement which the Spirit and Providence of God are urging upon us, and which we all know must sooner or later be made.

Future Retribution.—The Rev. C. A. Row, M. A., Prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral, author of the "Bampton Lectures on Christian evidences" and other valuable works in defence or explanation of the Christian faith, has recently published a work on the above subject. *The New York Churchman* of July 2d says of it:

"Any work from the pen of Prebendary Row is sure to exhibit clearness of style, thoroughness of preparation and the judicial tone befitting the critical spirit.

"In this present important treatise the author if not at his best is certainly very near it. It is quite impossible to exhaust this subject, much less the literature of it, within the limits of any single volume. At the same time the prebendary's work is a most valuable storehouse of information concerning it. It represents what is probably the prevailing view among the scholarly clergymen of the English and perhaps the American Church.

"After giving a brief and cutting analysis of the different schools of thought on the subject of future retribution, and after especially condemning the popular views which are, as he claims, 'too awful to be really accepted in this age,' and after laying down in a polemical way the basis of our knowledge and judgment concerning God's attributes of justice, holiness, etc., he subjects the teachings of the Old and New Testament to a very exhaustive analysis so far as they refer to future life and retribution.

"It is out of the question to enter into any adequate criticism of the author's positions and conclusions in this place. Suffice it to say that he evades no difficulties and leaves no vexed points untouched. He states his own views, and his own reason for these views with perfect candor and good taste. The general conclusion at which he arrives, as set forth on pages 379 and 380, and more extensively in the concluding chapter, is that 'Some opportunity of embracing His [Christ's] Gospel will be afforded to those innumerable multitudes of mankind, whose earthly probation has been passed under equally [with the antediluvians] unfavorable conditions—a conclusion to which the attributes of God, as they are revealed in Jesus Christ evidently point,' etc. He regrets Universalism, because while it is 'an approximation to the truth,' it fails of the 'entire truth.' There are souls in whom the reign of evil has become so absolute that they must, in the light of our Saviour's and of the Apostle's teachings, be held unredeemable.

"Eternal destruction awaits these. But the author maintains that a careful analysis of the language used in Scripture will show that eternal destruction is not a never-ending torture, but a final annihilation, due either to 'an exertion of God's Almighty power, or because He has so constituted the moral universe that, under His

providential government, the disease of evil will ultimately destroy man's spiritual and moral being, just as incurable physical disease destroys his bodily life.'"

This book, and these remarks upon it, confirm what was said in our last number concerning the drift of the highest and best Christian thought in both Europe and America away from the old creed-doctrine of the hopeless doom of all mankind who have died without knowing Christ. And this larger hope, instead of being an evidence of a weakening faith in Christianity and the Bible as from God, is only proof that men are beginning better to take in the meaning of its wonderful system of truth and grace. The conclusions at which this eminent evangelical writer arrives are very similar to those to which we have been led, although we fear he has not reached them in the right way. We suspect that, like too many writers of this class, he locates the gracious opportunities he hopes for in an imaginary intermediate state, overlooking the fact that the state of death into which sinful men pass is essentially penal, and that no hope can arise upon them in it, except as it connects itself with the hope of their resurrection out of death. What Christ heralded to "spirits *in prison*," and therefore under punishment, was the fact of His resurrection, which brought with it the hope of their future release. This would bring with it the opportunities of another trial in the life of manhood, out of which they had been ejected by death.

We observe also that, as in the case of Prof. Harris' book noticed last month, this author is compelled to believe that no life which sin has permanently separated from God can be immortal, and that therefore not eternal torment but a punishment ending in extinction awaits all such.

The Higher Criticism.—The *Presbyterian* seems to be as much concerned about Prof. Briggs' departure in this direction as it was some time ago over our view of the redemptive character of Resurrection. We do not agree with the new school of critics in their free dissection of the letter of Scripture. We have not, indeed, fully examined the evidences upon which they base their claims. But the criticism in our June number upon Prof. Briggs' mode of explaining certain prophetic passages which glow with the light of a hope toward God that there shall be a resurrection of the

dead, shows how we believe he has missed some of the great landmarks which can alone constitute a man a safe guide through Scripture. We do not therefore propose to follow him. But we should greatly deplore any attempt on the part of the church to prevent the free discussion of his views. Modern scholarship has raised these questions. They cannot be settled by suppression. A church that cannot stand a free and reverent discussion of matters of interpretation or of dogma that are thrust upon her in the energy of modern investigation must be weak indeed. Her defence must not be, and cannot be, in a timid shrinking within the shell of old and time-worn systems, but in the consciousness that the ever-present Spirit of God has been given unto her to guide her into all truth, and to cause the light of God in her and through her to break through all surrounding darkness. Brethren, let us trust less to creeds for our defence, and more to the in-dwelling presence of the Spirit of God. And let us remember that where He is, there must be liberty, and that we can do nothing against the truth but for the truth.

"Is Princeton Humanizing?"—Under this title the Rev. Newman Smyth, D. D. replies in *the Forum* to the article of Professor Patton, "Is Andover Romanizing?" He maintains that, notwithstanding the apparent reactionary features of Professor Patton's article, the theological system he represents is growing humane. And he finds proof of this in the "admissions and reticences, and evasions of difficulties" which are found in this very attempt of Professor Patton to criticise the Andover position. But, inasmuch as the humane opinions which are being admitted into Calvinism, such as the salvation of all infants and of some heathen, are "extra-biblical," he claims that Professor Patton's right to criticise the Andover opinions on this ground is vacated.

We are glad to agree with Dr. Smyth in observing that the old Calvinism is growing more humane. The recent erection of large and well-appointed hospitals in three of our largest cities, where the sick and wounded of all races and creeds may be ministered unto, gives evidence that the Presbyterian Church is "humanizing" in its practice, as well as its opinions. The idea that Christ's Church has been made the depositary of His grace and bounty, not merely

for her own sake, but that she may become the channel for conveying His blessings to others, is growing among us. The hard and fast lines by which the human race was divided into the two classes of elect and hopelessly reprobate are being obliterated. And instead there is coming in the conception of the church as an elect company whom God has chosen to be the ministers of His grace to the mass of their fellow-men, dead and living, upon whose sorrow and darkness the light has not yet shined. Here, while holding fast to the Scriptural doctrine of election, and of the sovereignty of God, for which Calvinism has made just and stout contention, we get also on to ground, which deserves a better name than "extra-biblical," where we see that God has not separated the church by any arbitrary decree from the rest of the human race, but that, in accord with the organic laws which underlie its constitution, He has chosen out a class who are the first-born in His great family in which there are to be later-born, and who are called to raise up the name of the dead upon their lost inheritance. We are quite sure that both the Andover speculation about a future probation for the heathen, and the Princeton doctrine which affirms that death fixes destiny, need to be supplemented by this larger and truer view of the purpose of God in electing a church "from the foundation of the world to the praise of the glory of His grace." (Eph. i. 4–6). The Andover mistake is in mimimizing this special salvation, and in supposing that the door to it is still kept open during an intermediate state. The Princeton mistake is in viewing "the glory of His grace" as limited to these objects of it. Whereas it must shine out from them as its first recipients, upon wider and wider circles in the great family of our common Father, "from whom every family in heaven and earth is named," (Eph. iii. 15, R. V.) and who has provided to bring all within its scope through their recovery out of death to another life.

The Object of Life.—In the same number of *The Forum* Mr. Grant Allen discusses this question, "What do we live for?" from the stand-point of the materialist. He speaks of the "old exploded dogmatic fallacy that the cosmos has been constructed upon a definite plan and with a deliberate design, instead of being merely, as we know it to be, the inevitable outcome of unconscious ener-

gies." As, therefore, the universe has no scheme and no designer, "life has no object, any more than the revolution of the planets has an object, or the double refraction of Iceland spar, or the particular flow of the back currents that swirl and eddy below the spray of Niagara."

Such a monstrous conclusion can only be based upon a monstrous assumption. Such an one we find in the first sentence above quoted, in which the author starts out with the assertion that "we now know the cosmos to be the inevitable outcome of unconscious energies." Who told Mr. Allen that these energies are unconscious? Where did he find this out? We advise him to go to school for a whileto the Theosophists. They are now telling us that even Matter can think. And among the evolutionists there are those who assure us that the most scientific conception of the universe is that it "is made of mind-stuff." Mr. Allen, we suppose, believes himself to have consciousness. He defines himself to be "a highly envolved final outcome of kinetic energy, falling upon the aqueous and gaseous envelopes of this particular earth's surface" Such, he tells us, was the genesis of the human race, which, viewed abstractly, has no more purpose to subserve in the scheme of the universe than the fungus of the vine-disease. But, granting that man is a product of the energies of nature, we would ask how can "unconscious energies" produce a self-conscious man? Is it not fair to assume that the forces which beget such a product must be themselves conscious? And here we come to the Biblical conception of the universe, as a system pervaded by conscious, intelligent, forces, the ministers of the One Supreme Force, the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth. It is a monstrous fallacy to assume that all these energies at work in creation from the beginning are unconscious. It must soon become a necessity of Science, as it is a truth of Scripture, to regard the forces of nature, known to us by such names as light and gravitation, and electricity and "kinetic energy," as the angels of His might, and to confess that "by Him were all things created, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things. And by Him all things consist." The idea of conscious life as the product of unconscious energies is so thin an absurdity that even a materialist ought to be able to see through it.